



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Public Comment Sought on Draft Judicial Ethics Advisory Opinion**

*Supreme Court Committee invites comment on a draft opinion providing  
guidance on attending partisan political fundraising events*

SAN FRANCISCO—The California Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions (CJEO) invites public comment on a draft opinion that provides guidance to judges on attending partisan political fundraising events as a political and civic activity and as a judicial campaign activity.

The draft opinion advises judges to consider whether their attendance might reasonably be perceived as endorsement or fundraising for a nonjudicial candidate or political party, which are prohibited activities under the California Code of Judicial Ethics.

The types of activities identified in the draft opinion as likely to give the appearance of endorsement or fundraising include being introduced as a judge, receiving an award, or being the guest of honor at an event where the primary purpose is to support or raise money for a nonjudicial candidate or political organization.

When asked to speak at political gatherings on the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice, the draft opinion advises judges to determine whether such a speaking appearance could reasonably be interpreted as an endorsement of a political candidate.

As guidance to candidates for judicial office, the draft opinion advises that judges who are campaigning may be introduced and speak on their own behalf or on behalf of another candidate for judicial office, so long as they do not commit to a position on an issue that is likely to come before the courts and do not endorse or solicit funds for a candidate for nonjudicial office or a political organization.

Finally, the draft opinion advises judges who are attending a political event that they have a duty to prevent their judicial title from being used to promote the event by informing the promoters in advance, inspecting the promotional materials, or taking reasonable corrective steps.

The draft opinion and invitation to comment are posted on the committee's website at <http://www.JudicialEthicsOpinions.ca.gov/itc>. The deadline for comment is **October 23, 2015**.

The committee invites the public to comment on this draft advisory opinion. All comments submitted to the committee are confidential communications and precluded from disclosure unless confidentiality is waived. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.80(h); CJEO Internal Operating Rules and Procedures, rule 5(b), (e).) Those comments submitted with a waiver of confidentiality will be posted for public view on the CJEO website at the close of the comment period. All of the comments the committee receives will be carefully considered by the CJEO members when finalizing and approving CJEO Formal Opinion No. 2015-008.

After considering the public's comments on the draft opinion, the committee will decide whether or not to publish an opinion in final form. Comments are due by **October 23, 2015**, and may be submitted in any of the following ways:

- Online using this [Comment Form](#);
- By email to [Judicial.Ethics@jud.ca.gov](mailto:Judicial.Ethics@jud.ca.gov); or
- By mailing comments to Ms. Nancy Black, Committee Counsel, The California Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions, 350 McAllister Street, San Francisco, California 94102.

CJEO is an independent committee appointed by the Supreme Court to help inform the judiciary and the public concerning judicial ethics topics. CJEO was established as part of the court's constitutional responsibility to guide the conduct of judges and judicial candidates (Cal. Const., art. VI, § 18, subd. (m)). In making appointments to serve on CJEO, the court selects members of the bench with a strong background in judicial ethics and diverse courtroom experience. The current twelve CJEO members are justices, judges, a commissioner, and a retired bench officer who have served in courts of various sizes throughout the state.

CJEO publishes formal opinions, issues confidential informal opinions, and provides oral advice on proper judicial conduct pursuant to the California Code of Judicial Ethics and other authorities (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.80(e)(1)). CJEO acts independently of the Supreme Court, the Commission on Judicial Performance, the Judicial Council, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and all other entities (rule 9.80(b)).

For more information about CJEO, visit the [CJEO website](#) and [view the members' page](#), call toll-free at 1 (855) 854-5366, or email [Judicial.Ethics@jud.ca.gov](mailto:Judicial.Ethics@jud.ca.gov).

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*The Supreme Court established the Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions (CJEO) to help inform the judiciary and the public concerning judicial ethics topics. (Cal. Rules of Court, [rule 9.80](#).) CJEO publishes formal advisory opinions, issues confidential written opinions, and provides oral advice on proper judicial conduct pursuant to*

*the [California Code of Judicial Ethics](#) and other authorities. In providing its advisory opinions, the committee acts independently of the Supreme Court, the Commission on Judicial Performance, the Judicial Council, and all other entities. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.80(b).) The Supreme Court is responsible for adopting the Code of Judicial Ethics, which guides the conduct of judges on and off the bench (Cal. Const., Art. VI, § 18, subd. (m).)*